487

Rome Dec^r. 12^th. 1825

My dear Maria

I hope this will come to you just on Christmas day and so all my good news will be a help to your merriments — my Father will sing over Rule Britannia ~~twice~~ for my sake — and the flavor of his mothers Plum pudding will be increased by it's so I shall try to be jolly — if it is only in thinking what I am going to tell you — First you must know that Lucky Dog as I am) my picture of the Vintage which has cost me such great labor, is sold to the Duke of Bedford for £150 — to be placed in a choice collection of pictures he is now forming of the most celebrated of the modern Masters — Is not this like a closing upon me — for I could not wish for more success — Now are the other pictures of mine coming to England all sold, and I have got many orders for other according to my own fancy — I am now occupied on King Lear — for Mr Erskine — my health is completely established, I am stronger than ever I was before — and think of nothing but fame & fortune — certainly I am in the road for them, and may soon do as I please — my pictures attract the greatest notice here in Rome

for they are in a style of Art entirely new - I am fortunate in every possible way, and there is not an Artiste here else is but favored - It amuses what a great desire I feel to make a fortune - and am determined to "turn any penny" whichever & wherever I can, and then I'll come to England - but at present I am so busy & you getting on & any prospect in the way of money. That I write not take any step that will not lead to it - So the visit I hope to make you next Summer will depend on this point - if I can get some good commissions, if not, why I must come - only think of that now - and for a man of my thinking "always" to be obliged to come back to his "Mamma" - now I don't care a fig - and why should I - for if I "play my cards well" my fortune is made -

Well I suppose this will find you all as busy as bees setting down to dinner - but think of me & my good appetites and remember me in a Toast - as they cannot give me an account of the whole day - of the Music of Tom & Charles - not even forgetting the pudding - I beg why cannot you do this, it will give me great pleasure

ask Tom if he does not think Gray's Bard a fine subject for Music. I find it is mentioned in the Letters that a Pupil of Bardi's named Smith was going to set it. but it never was done, the Ode was to have been brought in very much, particularly in the Overture. We will find all this in Gray's Letters — —

I suppose you have weather bad enough now, for here we are having continued rain. it is like being in England. except that here we don't expect it, you always do, so we make up your minds to it. — There are a few more Welsh. Hilton & Phillips. the first stays all the winter, he often returns and sails to England — to hear more news of Tom, when he had Mr. Cotterwood arrived. I be able to tell you all particulars about me, that you can want —

— In my house I am going on the same comfortable way — the same Peasants are living with me and I am liked in their houses — why what a set of people the English are — they think all the Italians are traitors — when I have found them (with exceptions) far more honest than the English — I have been 5 years, (what a time it seems) and. have scarce heard of any Robbery or Murder here — I walk about without the smallest

fear of being robbed or murdered - which is more than I could say in England - to you I must Not forget Remember me to Father and Mother and all you little ones " believe me ever your faithful Brother Joseph

Joseph Smith Jr.
Mr Hiram Smith
Mc Lean Co Ill
for Favor